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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

REPORT NO [REDACTED]

SUBJECT Failure to Harvest Crops / Lack of Qualified Manpower/
 Prediction That Food Situation Will Be Bad This Winter/
 Khrushchev's Plan to Cultivate Virgin Soil in Central
 Asia/Shortage of Technicians With Secondary
 Education

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1. "An expert on Soviet affairs [REDACTED] who carefully studies Pravda and Izvestia has come to the following conclusion: part of the crops, more particularly regarding vegetables, have not been harvested in the USSR partly because of bad organization (of which the newspapers are frequently complaining) and partly because of the shortage of manpower as well as insufficient technical equipment. There are many indications that the situation in 1954 has deteriorated in comparison to that of 1953 particularly on kolkhozes.
2. "Party primary organizations in the country are now being employed in the harvesting, but it appears from the publicity campaign at this time /this report is dated early Oct 54/ that the shortage of qualified manpower is almost catastrophic on the kolkhozes and sovkhozes.. The papers attempt to explain this by saying that considerable numbers of specialists have been sent to cultivate virgin soil (Pravda, 14 Sept 54).
3. "In the majority of virgin soil settlements, winter will begin at any moment now, and the plans for building residential houses, cattlesheds, etc are being delayed. Evidently, living conditions in these settlements are very bad and will grow much worse as the winter progresses as the weather will paralyze part of the transportation system.
4. "Generally speaking, there are no indications in the press that the agricultural crisis has lessened. Obviously, the food situation is always improved during the harvest period because people can more easily procure food for themselves, but it is safe to assume that the food situation during the coming winter /1954/ will be much worse than during the previous one.
5. "Khrushchev's grandiose plan of large-scale cultivation of virgin soil in

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Central Asia and the resulting depopulation of the kolkhozes, still give the impression that this plan is only a link in his long-term program to liquidate the peasant class completely. Peasants sent from the kolkhozes to the new 'virgin soil' settlements have been cut off from their natural environs and are mixed up with townspeople -- factory workers and others who have been forcibly sent to cultivate the soil -- on the new sovkhozes.

6. "On 15 Sept 54, Pravda published an interesting lead article on the shortage of technicians with secondary educations. This shortage is detrimental to the entire economic life of the USSR and is the main reason why the technical equipment in industry and agriculture is not being made use of effectively. It seems that the cultivation of virgin soil depleted the numbers of these technicians who were taken not only from the already existing farm estates [PGRs] but also from industry. Attention was drawn to this shortage in other articles too, and evidently it is one of the reasons for the deteriorating industrial production. The papers give the impression that matters are worse in heavy industry -- in the mines and in the iron and steel industry (Pravda, 22 Sept 54).
7. "In Soviet home politics in the first nine months of 1954, it appears from the press that the USSR is now undergoing a period of interior weakness and want of clarity. In a very much simplified form the following factors may be mentioned as reasons for this weakness:
- a. The Party needs a new inner consolidation after the so-called liberty period after Stalin's death when certain CP organs seem to have broken down.
 - b. The problem of a leader within the Party has not been solved yet. The rivalry between Malenkov and Khrushchev still prevails, and the so-called collective leadership is nothing but a cover hiding the existing inner struggles within the party.
 - c. The giant plan of new cultivations in Asia and Khrushchev's present reform -- the final purpose of which is the liquidation of the peasant class, demands large scale migrations and forcible transfers of manpower which causes considerable disturbances in production and is detrimental to the order necessary within the country. The curtailed power of the MVD after Beria's fall hampers the efforts of the Party and Government to get a more secure grip on the people and to improve the situation particularly in the 'virgin soil' districts.
 - d. Over and above the permanent agricultural crisis, increasing difficulties are evident in two important fields -- transportation and construction. Particularly alarming is the transportation situation. In connection with the cultivation of virgin soil, which is to a certain extent altering Soviet geography, the transportation has failed to satisfy the needs of the new settlements.
 - e. The food situation is very tight, and there are indications in the press that this situation will become worse during the coming winter. The situation is not improved by the fact that the Party and Government made considerable promises to improve the living conditions after Stalin's death.
 - f. The increasing shortage of qualified manpower is being felt in all fields of Soviet economic life, more particularly in connection with the cultivation of virgin soil. On the other hand, it seems that the shortage of unqualified manpower has been eliminated. Rumors that the USSR and China concluded an agreement concerning a common slave labor market are being confirmed [redacted]

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